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WKCTC Announces The Allan Rhodes, Sr. History Award Recipient

West Kentucky Community and Technical College student Robert K. Ford (LaCenter, Kentucky) was presented a check for \$1,000 for his winning submission in the Allan Rhodes, Sr. History Award challenge. The Allan Rhodes, Sr. History Award encourages WKCTC students to research overlooked Kentuckians in our nation's and Kentucky's history.

Mr. Ford's submission highlights the life of Sergeant Morris Eugene Crain, a native of Bandana, Kentucky. Crain enlisted in 1942 and fought in World War II as a member of the 141st Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division. On a furlough visit following graduation from Infantry training, he married Charlene McTaggart from Oscar, Kentucky.

Ford writes that Crain's unit served in northern Africa, before moving to the European countries of Italy and France. Over the course of his short service, Crain was awarded two Purple Hearts. Crain lost his life on March 13, 1945 during the Battle of Hagenau (France) while bravely defending his unit's location while members escaped the German offensive. Sadly, Crain had never met his young daughter Morris Fay Crain.

This two-year old girl would accept the Congressional Medal of Honor presented to her father, "not knowing what is was or exactly what the father she would never get to meet had done. Pictures of the little girl with her father's medal draped around her neck were published in newspapers throughout the United States," writes Ford.

Today, a monument honoring Sergeant Crain and other Ballard countians lost in the war stands at Ballard Memorial High School. Additionally, a cargo vessel, The Mills Victory, was rechristened to honor Crain and a building a Ft. Benning, Georgia was named Crain Hall in his honor.

WKCTC History Professor Berry Craig states, "Ford is one of the best and brightest students I have had the pleasure to teach." As a part of this project, participants were required to document primary sources. "Ford located service comrades and family members to accurately portray Sergeant Crain's actions," says Craig. "His research was top-notch and very deserving of this honor."

In addition to the \$1,000 award, Ford's submission will be published in the Jackson Purchase Historical Society Journal, and featured on Berry Craig's Notebook that airs on Paducah Channel 2.